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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 002156

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2014

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [NL](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS - STATUS OF WEOG CHR ELECTION ROTATION

REF: A. THE HAGUE 1793

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 172297

[1](#)C. TRAUB/MEHRA E-MAIL OF 8/25

[1](#)D. RUBIN/SCHOFFER E-MAIL OF 8/25

Classified By: Andrew Schofer, PolCouns, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Since ref A discussions in mid-July, the Dutch have failed to make much progress on their offer to restart negotiations on a WEOG election rotation scheme for the UN Commission on Human Rights, according to Karel van Kesteren, MFA Human Rights Director with whom Poloff spoke on August [1](#)23. We provided him a copy of the Secretary's letter (ref b) on August 27 (received via e-mail, ref c). Van Kesteren said that immediately after the meetings here with IO DAS Lagon and DRL AA/S Kozak in July, he had e-mailed Canadian MFA official Marie Gervais-Vidricaire to tell her the USG had offered one more year to the package (meaning we would sit out 19 of 21 years). According to van Kesteren, she replied that if the USG were indeed ready to be more flexible then it might be possible to try again to reach a compromise. He took the opportunity to remind us that his solution requires that the US relinquish three out of 21 years, not just two.

[1](#)2. (C) Post understands (ref d) that there have been discussions with Canadian counterpart Gervais-Vidricaire, who proposes starting discussions with WEOG in New York before moving on to capitals. Van Kesteren (protect) volunteered earlier that negotiations would work better if they are not based in New York at all. "Microstates" (his word) and smaller states (Luxembourg, and particularly Austria, for example) make working in the open New York forum impossible, he said, noting that such states joined hands in the last round and blocked consensus in an effort to squeeze more votes for themselves.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: We had left it in July with Van Kesteren to move this initiative ahead, after he seemed enthusiastic to keep control of a project in which he has already invested much effort. The lack of progress since July is not surprising given other pressing UN business and the summer break, now ending. The Dutch would still prefer to minimize WEOG meetings in New York, leaving the real brokering to the Dutch and the Canadians in capitals. Consensus will likely require getting one WEOG member at a time to sign on, thereby building momentum.

RUSSEL